



The President's Daily Brief

29 June 1972

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

COSVN has linked orders for further offensive action to the suggestion that negotiations with the US may be in the offing. Meanwhile, South Vietnamese forces are continuing their push into Quang Tri Province. (Page 1)

On Page 4 we discuss the Israeli defense minister's warning that Israel will act to stop fedayeen terrorism from Lebanon.

The Soviets are preparing for a manned space event which may be similar to last year's mission involving Soyuz 11 and a Salyut station. (Page 5)

The Turkish Government's ban on opium poppy cultivation faces new opposition in Parliament. (Page 6)

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VIETNAM

COSVN has ordered further offensive action on the military and political fronts, linking this to the suggestion that negotiations with the US may be in the offing.

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Communist cadre recently were briefed on new directives from the southern command. The directives called for strenuous efforts to seize territory, gain control over more people, undermine the pacification program, and defeat the South Vietnamese Army.

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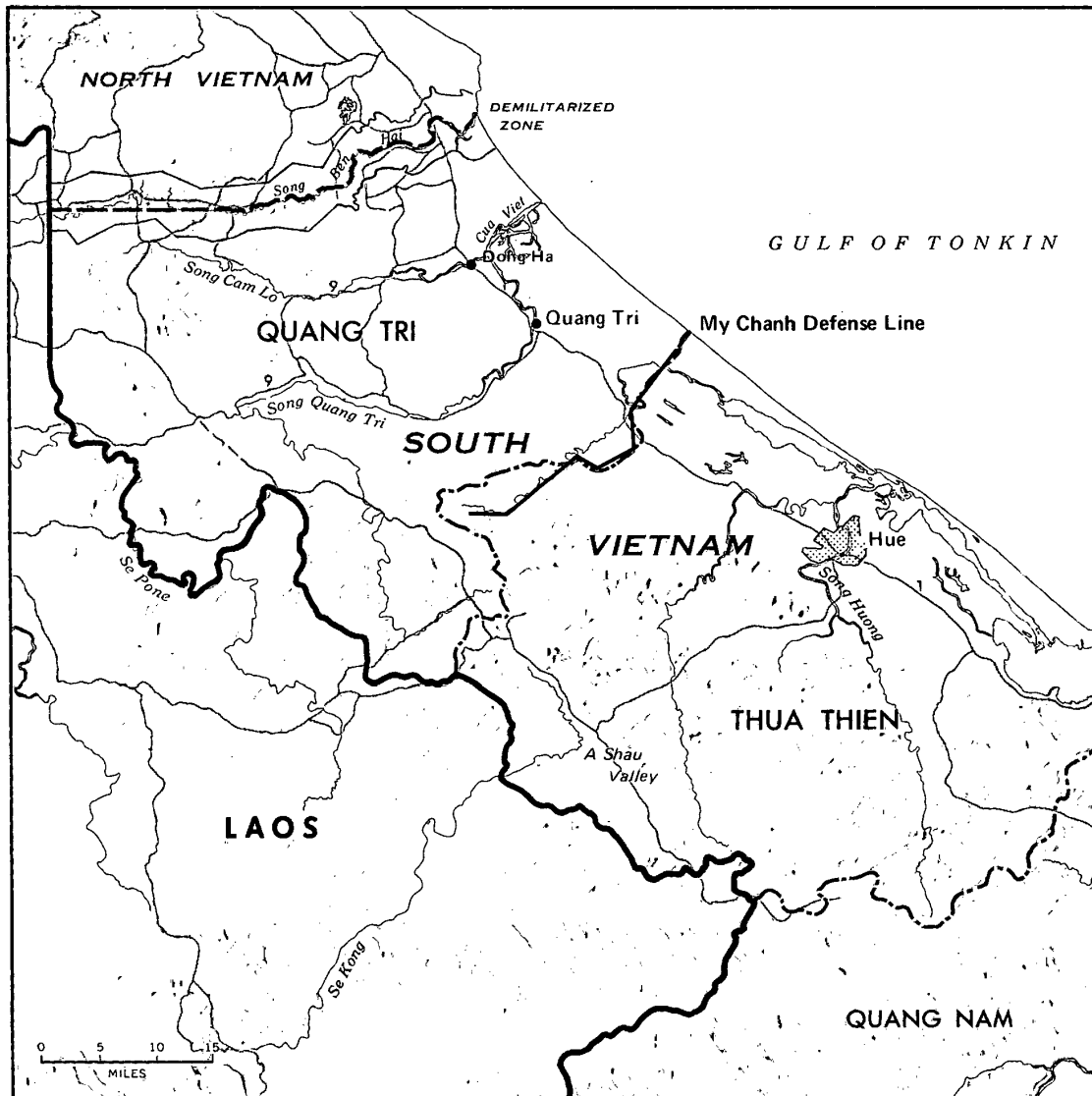
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The directives may simply be designed to get one more all-out effort from Communist cadres. Communist commanders have tried in the past to exhort their forces to better performance by holding out the prospect of a cessation of the war after certain objectives, usually the occupation of larger areas, are achieved. If this is all the Communists are aiming at, however, it is hard to explain why they raised the possibility that their side might have to compromise on a point as important as the continued existence of the Thieu government.

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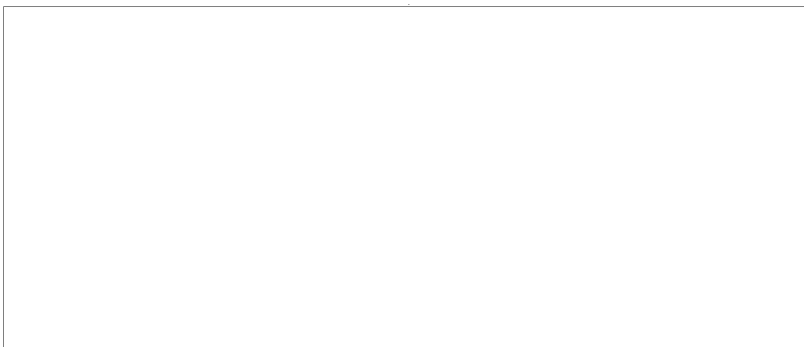
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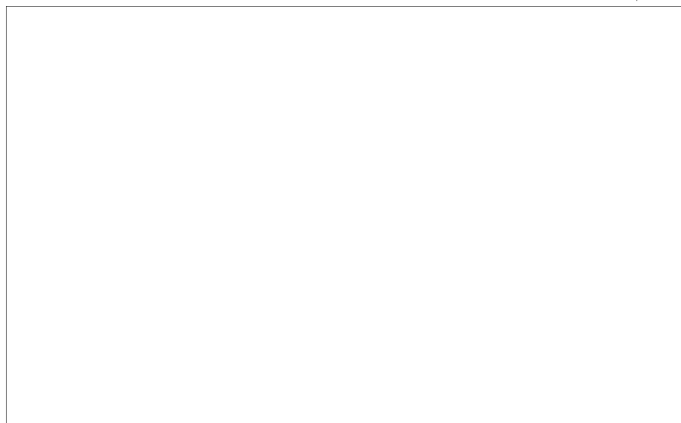
Communists will be maintaining strong military pressure over the short run and that they will be doing their best to keep open their military options even if negotiations should get under way.

* * *

South Vietnamese forces driving into Quang Tri Province have moved about halfway to Quang Tri City from the My Chanh defense line, according to South Vietnamese officials today. Heavy fighting has been reported by paratroopers moving to the west of Route 1 and by marines pushing along the coast. Helicopters landed an additional 1,000 marines in the coastal area today.

A brigade of South Vietnamese paratroopers from An Loc and two regular army regiments have moved into the defensive positions previously manned by the forces now moving toward Quang Tri. Nevertheless, government forces northwest of Hue are stretched thin, with few reserves available to meet any major enemy attack along the western approach to the city.

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The North Vietnamese have moved at least some supplies from China deep into North Vietnam's pan-handle. According to a recently available message of 21 June from a major logistics authority in the Vinh area, six vehicles had delivered 23 tons of ordnance, including 122-mm. and 130-mm. artillery shells from Dong Dang, the rail yard at the Chinese border. On some recent nights, aerial observers have reported spotting long truck convoys moving south from the Dong Dang area.

* * *

Another supplementary economic and military aid agreement between China and North Vietnam was signed yesterday in Peking. As is customary, the amount of aid--which includes "gratuitous" military equipment and supplies--was not disclosed.

The agreement came almost two months after North Vietnam's chief negotiator arrived in China, suggesting that things did not go as smoothly as the North Vietnamese may have wished.

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ISRAEL-LEBANON

Israeli Defense Minister Dayan on Tuesday publicly warned that Israel would henceforth take forthright action to stop terrorist acts from Lebanon, including preventive strikes against the fedayeen there.

The Israelis believe that Lebanon must crack down on the fedayeen the way King Husayn did in 1970-71, and their warning of new strikes inside Lebanon is intended to increase further the pressure on Beirut to act.

The Israelis may be too optimistic about what Beirut can do. The Lebanese Army does not have the physical capability completely to seal the border, especially in the troublesome Arqub area. Beirut, nevertheless, appears to be trying. President Franjiyah announced yesterday that the fedayeen had agreed to suspend their operations against Israel. We doubt, however, that all fedayeen groups will honor this agreement.

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USSR

Preparations are now under way for a manned space event that evidently is scheduled to take place within the next several weeks.

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If the Soviets do launch a space station, we believe that the mission will be similar to the ill-fated one conducted last year involving Soyuz 11 and a Salyut station. The Salyut launch would then be followed by the launch of a manned Soyuz. The timing of the coming mission presumably depends on successful tests of the unmanned Soyuz spacecraft--Cosmos 496--launched Monday.

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TURKEY

The government's ban on opium poppy cultivation is running into new opposition in Parliament. Prominent politicians from both major parties have recently been criticizing various aspects of the ban. Over a hundred members of Parliament, all from the predominant Justice Party, now are sponsoring legislation to permit farmers to resume poppy cultivation exclusively for processing in government factories and use in pharmaceuticals.

Although the growers would be forbidden to extract opium, the proposed scheme would greatly complicate the problem of government control over illicit opium traffic. At least for the present, the Melen government appears determined to continue the ban and move ahead with related compensation and crop substitution projects; but the opium issue could become difficult to handle as the national elections of September 1973 approach.

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